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School Committee Minutes 05-22-2001

Arlington School Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, May 22, 2001
7:30 PM

Present: **Joani LaMachia, Chair** **Suzanne Owayda**
 David W. McKenna, Vice-Chair **Paul Schlichtman**
 Denis J. Sullivan, Secretary **Martin J. Thrope**
 Barbara C. Goodman

Superintendent **Kay Donovan**
Asst. Supt. Curriculum & Instruction **Joanne Gurry**
Chief Financial Officer **David Kale**
Director of Special Education **Marilyn Bisbicos**

Call To Order: 7:30 PM

Public Participation

Bob Geribo and Jim Robillard spoke relative to the Peirce Field scoreboard and offered their support in any fund raising efforts.

Liane Cronin addressed the committee asking the School Committee for a response relative to her settlement agreement of December 10, 1999.

Larry Jones and Carol Lurie spoke relative to the open enrollment policy. They requested that the Committee revisit the policy for clarification for a hardship component and to consider revising the policy so that siblings are guaranteed placement together.

Secretary's Report

Mr. Sullivan reviewed correspondence.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was
Voted to approve the regular meeting minutes of April 10, 2001. Unanimous

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was
Voted to approve the regular meeting minutes of April 24, 2001. Unanimous

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was
Voted to approve and hold the executive session minutes of March 13, 2001. 5-2, Mr. Schlichtman and Ms. Owayda abstain.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was
Voted to approve and hold the executive session minutes of March 27, 2001.

Mr. Thrope stated that he believed that the minutes are in error, after checking his notes and with Mr. Healy, Mr. Thrope believed that the final phrase was not part of the motion and moved to amend the motion by striking the final phrase, no second. Mr. Sullivan checked with other members who agreed with the motion as written.

On the Vote: 4 yes (Ms. Goodman, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. McKenna, Ms. LaMachia) 2 abstentions (Mr. Schlichtman & Ms. Owayda), 1 no (Mr. Thrope) Mr. Thrope stated that along with his no vote, that the minutes reflect his strenuous objection of approval and to note his vigorous suggestion that the Committee not hold an executive session without a tape recorder or a recording secretary present.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Thrope
Voted to approve and hold the executive session minutes of April 10, 2001. Unanimous

MASS Certificate of Academic Excellence

Chair, Joani LaMachia presented AHS seniors Leslie Curren and Sara Baldwin with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents

certificate for academic excellence.

Scoreboard Update

Supt. Donovan announced that the AHS football team had been reinstated in GBL division I and congratulated Rob DiLoreto and Charlie McCarthy for their efforts.

The Superintendent confirmed that Mr. Armstrong did donate \$50,000.00 and that the school committee approved use of the funds for a scoreboard. Mr. DiLoreto requested proposals for the scoreboard and learned that the cost is estimated at \$40,000.00 to \$60,000.00. Because of the cost it is required to go out to bid, however Mrs. Donovan believes it will be ready and in place by the start of the fall season. Questions arose regarding the use of defibrillators and for private fund raising to maintain fields. The Committee agreed to invite the school's attorney to speak to members relative to liability issues surrounding the use of defibrillators on school property, and to receive input from the school physician on the issue. The issue of advertising will be addressed in the policy & procedures subcommittee. Mr. DiLoreto will meet with Mr. Armstrong to review the proposal.

Update on Redistricting

Supt. Donovan stated that at the request of the finance committee she would revisit the size, demographics, and enrollment figures of the remaining three schools. Mrs. Donovan does not anticipate any major changes and will enumerate space requirements for other programs, i.e. sped programs etc.

Evaluation Of Elementary Spanish Program 2000-2001

Ms. LaMachia informed the committee that Shelagh Peoples, who was to give the presentation, was ill and unable to attend the meeting. Judi Bohn, Partners In Education coordinator highlighted the survey results for the Committee.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was

Voted that Supt. Donovan, along with the principals review the recommendations of the Spanish survey and report back to the committee on their finding in September 2001. Unanimous

Recess

Draft/MASC Resolution

Mr. Schlichtman spoke to the draft resolution on school building assistance to MASC that urges the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to fulfill its commitment to municipalities and school districts by fully funding the state share of school construction projects.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was

Voted to adopt the resolution on School Building Assistance, and to forward it to MASC and other School Committees for their consideration. Unanimous

Ms. Goodman spoke on the draft resolution on Chapter 70 funding that asks MASC to urge the legislature to require annual updates of the foundation budget that would accurately and realistically reflect the true cost of regular education and special education, and would provide competitive teacher salaries.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was

Voted to adopt the resolution on Chapter 70 funding as presented, send it to MASC and other school committees for co-sponsorship at the MASC annual delegate meeting. Unanimous

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was

Voted to appoint Barbara Goodman as delegate to represent ASC at its annual meeting. Unanimous.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. McKenna it was

Voted to appoint Paul Schlichtman as the alternate delegate at the MACS annual convention. Unanimous.

Budget Review/Town Meeting Update

Supt. Donovan informed the Committee that the school budget presentation would take place on Wednesday night at Town Meeting. Town Meeting voted to accept the Finance Committees recommendation on all budgets in the Town except for the schools' budget.

Mrs. Donovan stated that the \$30,828,677.00 recommended budget would be used to fund contractual obligations, special education increases, and the energy fund.

The Supt. reviewed her recommended reductions and adjustments to the budget. (attached)

- .. Fund two elementary teachers with \$70,000.00 from Metco Funds
- .. Maintain the \$500.00 program fee for All Day Kindergarten
- .. Eliminate \$15,000.00 slated for athletics
- .. Use \$175,000.00 from the revolving rental account to pay for energy costs
- .. Fund the expansion of the world languages through grants or private funding

Mr. Thrope had questions on sick leave buy back, all day kindergarten and increasing rental fees on after school programs. He believed that the ADK fee should be eliminated at this point, that the Committee has a priority in bringing the fee to zero. It is public education and we should not be paying for it.

Mr. Thrope voiced frustration over not receiving the recommended cuts sooner than the past Friday when he requests them five weeks ago.

Mr. McKenna took issue with Mr. Thrope's comment that he did not receive the recommendation in a timely manner and that it is unfair to

criticize the administration.

Mr. Thrope asked for a point of personal privilege and stated that five weeks ago he had requested that the Superintendent examine the budget thoroughly to find out if there were other opportunities to cut spending.

Supt. Donovan stated that she did not feel comfortable eliminating the fee with such a tight budget; that she needed that \$130,000.00 to have some flexibility in hiring new teachers.

Mr. Sullivan emphasized that after contractual obligations the increase in the budget in only \$300,00.00. Mr. Schlichtman commended Kay for making the best of bad situation. He pointed out that the athletic budget has been level funded for a number of years and has been trying to do more with the same amount of money. The programs are vital to our students and he encouraged community members to give assistance wherever possible.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Schlichtman

Voted to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to accept the budget as adjusted: a 5.2% increase (\$1,543,919.00) for a total amount of \$30,828,674.00 for Fiscal Year 2002. Unanimous.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope and seconded by Ms. Owayda

Moved that in the fall when hiring has taken place that our 1st priority be to restore funds in the kindergarten fund to reduce the ADK fee. Roll Call: 6-no 1 yes (Mr. Thrope voted yes) motion fails.

Mr. Schlichtman stated that he felt uncomfortable with the motion and would like to keep options open. Ms. Owayda stated that she seconded the motion for discussion purposes; she did not personally have a problem with paying \$500.00 and agreed that we should keep our options open.

Mr. Sullivan noted that he is not in favor of the motion because all options need to be examined. He fully supports funding ADK, he believes that \$500.00 is reasonable and hopes to reduce it to zero by next year.

Mr. McKenna pointed out that when the user fees for athletics and music were implemented the vote stated that if additional funding was found we would reduce those user fees first. He urged caution when deciding which fees would be reduced.

Mr. Sullivan made a point of personal privilege stating that six members are now on the record for voting against full funding all day kindergarten and noted it was inconsiderate to force it to a roll call.

Vote on Policy for Special Dedication/Requests for Dedication

Moved to the next meeting

Vote on School Choice

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Ms. Goodman:

Voted the Superintendent's recommendation that Arlington Public Schools not participate as a Choice District for the 2001-2202 school year. Unanimous.

Special Education Update

Ms. Bisbicos highlighted a proposal to initiate a new class to serve five to seven year old children. The proposed program will serve young children who have been identified as having special needs or as being at risk for substantial difficulty if assigned to regular education kindergarten classrooms. Students will work in small groups and individually with the teacher and the assistant with the goal of incremental movement into mainstream experiences. The ultimate objective of the program is to prepare and place students in regular education classrooms fulltime.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was

Voted to approve the Primary Integrated Classroom Program concept and to the transfer of funds from the tuition account to fund staff salaries. Unanimous.

New Business

On motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Mr. Sullivan

Voted to grant permission for the computer club to attend the national convention in Florida. Unanimous.

.. Teacher Appreciation Ceremony will be held at the Ottoson, May 30th at 2:45PM

.. Cancer Relay will be held June 8th and 9th.

.. Ms. Goodman congratulated the performing arts students & teachers on their performance at the Pops Concert.

.. Mr. Thrope requested guidance from the Committee on the on an upcoming vote on the PTBC relative to an appropriation of money.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. McKenna

Voted that Ed Starr represent the School Committee on the Arlington Transportation Advisory Committee. Unanimous

Supt. Donovan brought the Committee up to date on the status of the student suspended for threatening a teacher with a pellet gun. Because he is a special education student and he has been out of school for 45 days; he has the right to appeal to come back to school. Mrs. Donovan believes the decision will be that he has a right under Federal law to come back to school, however it does not take away the criminal action or the orders that state that the student cannot come back to school and cannot be near the teacher or any witnesses.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. McKenna

Voted to enter executive session for the purpose of negotiations. RC: Unanimous

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. McKenna it was

Voted to accept the contract negotiated between Superintendent Donovan and Chairman LaMachia:

.. A salary increase of 10% in the amount of \$10,816.00 and \$1000.00 towards life insurance effective July 1, 2000. (for a salary amount of \$118,976.00)

.. A salary increase of \$10,816.00 and \$1000.00 towards life insurance effective July 1, 2001. (for a salary amount of \$129,792.00)

.. An extension of her contract until 2004.

Roll Call: 6 yes -1 no; Mr. Thrope stated with his no vote that he could not justify an increase of that amount.

The Committee will retake/announce the vote at the meeting on June 12th.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Ms. Goodman:

Voted to adjourn at 11:55 PM